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# DISSERTATION

ON THE

## DEMONIACS

IN THE

## G O S P E L S.

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*N Bible New Testament.*



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L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN and FRANCIS RIVINGTON, at the Bible  
and Crown (N<sup>o</sup> 62) in St. Paul's Church-Yard.

M.DCC.LXXV.

[ Price One Shilling. ]

NOTIFICATION

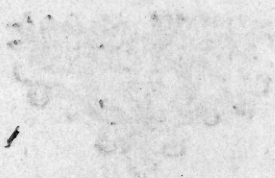
ON THE

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IN THE

OF S. P. L. E.

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LONDON

Printed by J. G. & Co. 10, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.

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# ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

R E A D E R,

**T**H E following Dissertation is one of many, which in due time may see the light. It was thought proper to single this from the rest, and to print it at this time and in this manner, some things having lately been published contrary to the doctrine herein contained, and contrary (as it is conceived) to the truth of the gospel. The Author is too far advanced in life, and has too much other business upon his hands, to engage in any controversy about it. It must stand or fall by its own merit: If right, it will want no vindication; if wrong, it deserves none.

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A D I S

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A  
DISSERTATION  
ON THE  
DEMONIACS.

I N reading the gospels, I make no doubt, it hath happened to many others as well as to myself, that they have been struck with the accounts of the *demoniacs* or persons possessed with devils, and have wondered within themselves what kind of beings these demons, and what sort of disorders these possessions could be. We do not read of so many cases of this kind either before or after this period, neither do we certainly know of any such instances at present: And why should they abound so much more at this time than at any other, and yet the Jews speak not of them as any matter of  
B surprise



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surprise or novelty, but as things not unusual among them? They express much wonder at our Saviour's manner of curing these disorders, but none at the disorders themselves, as if they were not unaccustomed to them. These questions have been much agitated among learned men, who generally are divided in two contrary opinions, the one that these possessions were real operations of devils, the other that they were nothing more than natural causes and effects, and were such distempers as are incidental to men, but only with different names. Now the better to judge and determin in which scale the truth preponderates, we must hold the balance with an even hand, incline neither to the one side nor to the other, but weigh and examin things with deliberation and by degrees.

I. Our first inquiry will naturally be What kind of beings these *demons* were, and consequently whether the word is rightly translated *devils*. In one of the dissertations on the prophecies, explaining that text of the *doctrins of demons or devils*, it was shown

from

(1) Plutarch. Dion in initio. τῶν πᾶν παλαιῶν. κ. τ. λ.  
p. 958.



from Plato and the best authorities, that demons, according to the theology of the Gentiles, were middle powers between the sovran Gods and mortal men; that these demons were regarded as mediators and agents between the Gods and men; that of these demons there were accounted two kinds; that one kind of demons were the souls of men deified or canonized after death; that the other kind of demons were such as had never been the souls of men, nor ever dwelt in mortal bodies; that these latter demons may be paralleled with angels, as the former may with canonized saints; and as we Christians believe that there are good and evil angels, so did the Gentiles that there were good and evil demons. According to Plutarch (1) 'it was a very ancient opinion, that there are certain wicked and malignant demons, who envy good men, obstruct their actions, induce troubles and terrors, to hinder them in the pursuit of virtue, lest after death they should be partakers of greater happiness than they enjoy.'

p. 958. Tom. 1. Edit. Parif. 1624. See Dissertation XXIII. on the Prophecies.

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In the management of this controversy, as indeed in most other controversies, the arguments have been pushed too far on both sides. On one side it has been affirmed that *demons* were nothing more than the souls of deceased men, and never before the coming of Christ signified devils or malicious beings, malevolent, hurtful to mankind, delighting in promoting wickedness. On the other side it has been asserted, that the word *demon* doth not signify a departed soul either in the Classics or in the Scriptures. But both parties, as I apprehend, are greatly mistaken. For there are other demons besides the souls of deceased men, noxious evil demons, and so called before our Saviour's time; and there are instances of the word *demon* signifying a departed soul both in the Classics and in the Scriptures, though perhaps oftener in the former than in the latter. In the dissertation above mentioned it hath been proved from Hesiod Plato and other authorities, that good men after death become

demons

(2) Δαιμονας δε εστις νοει ψυχικας, και ηρωας τας κεχωρισμεναις ψυχαις των ανθρωπων: αβαντες μεν τας αβαντας, κακους δε τας φαντασιν. Apud Athenag. Legat. pro Christianis. p. 25. Δαιμονοι υπαρχουσι

demons, good beings, guardians of mortal men, and authors of good to mankind; and wicked men after death, by parity of reason, must become other demons, evil beings, tempters of mortal men, and authors of evil to mankind. That there were wicked and malignant demons, obstructing and envying the virtue and happiness of men, was, according to Plutarch in the fore-cited passage, a very ancient opinion, *των πανυ παλαιων*; and consequently an opinion that prevailed before our Saviour's time. Thales, one of the first and best of the Greek philosophers, distinguisheth between demons and heroes, (2) affirming demons to be spiritual substances, and heroes to be the souls of men separated from bodies, some good and some bad. In Homer, Pindar, Ocellus Lucanus and others, philosophers as well as poets, mention is often made of the hateful and evil demon, and of evil demons, *κακοδαιμονες*; and the like properties and actions are ascribed to them, which we commonly attribute to evil angels. The very

*ἵπαρχειν ὁσίας ψυχικας, εἶναι δὲ καὶ ἥρωας τὰς κεχωρισμένας ψυχὰς τῶν σωμάτων.* Plut. de Placit. Philosoph. Lib. 1. Cap. 8. p. 882. Edit. Paris. 1624.

etymology



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etymology of the word in some measure evinces what kind of beings they were accounted. For the most probable derivation of it is from a word signifying *learned, knowing, skilful &c*; δαίμονες quasi δαημονες says (3) Plato, as if they were beings of superior knowlege. (4) Proclus on Hesiod, and the Scholiast on Homer say that they are called *demons* as knowing all things, or as being the dispensers and distributors of good and evil things to men, the word δαω signifying to *divide* as well as to *learn*. Eusebius proposes another derivation, and says (5) that they are fitly called demons from δειμαίνειν, filling men with fears and terrors. Here then, without multiplying more quotations, are sufficient evidences from the Classics, that the word *demon* doth sometimes signify a departed soul, and that there are other demons besides departed souls, of a superior nature, some good and beneficial, others evil and hurtful to mankind, and so named before the coming of Christ.

(3) Plat. in Cratylo. p. 398. Edit. Serrani. Vol. 1.

(4) Proclus in Hesiod. Παρά το δαῖναι τὰ πάντα, ἢ μερίζειν τὰ ἀσάθα καὶ κακὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. In Iliad. I. 222. Δαίμονας καλεῖ τὸς θεοὺς, ἧλοι δαημονας· ἐμπειροὶ γὰρ καὶ ἰδρὶες παλίων αὐτοὶ εἰσιν, ἢ ὅτε δαήλαι εἰσι καὶ διοικῆσαι τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

But



## ON THE DEMONIACS. 7

But the right notion of demons is to be drawn, not from the Classics, but from the Scriptures, which are the source and standard of all true demonology as well as of all true theology. Now in the Scriptures it must be admitted that the word *demons* most usually signifies *devils*: but in the foresaid dissertation some instances are produced to the contrary, to show that the worshipping of *demons* is the worshipping of the *dead*, chiefly out of St. Paul, who being the most learned of all the apostles, and speaking and writing to the Greeks, might express himself in accommodation to their notions. I would not repeat what has been said elsewhere; but these instances excepted, the signification of the word is so clear in other places, that there can be no doubt of its being rightly translated *devils*. The text of St. James (II. 19.) “The demons believe and tremble” cannot with propriety be applied to any other beings, nor well admit any other translation than “The devils believe and tremble.”

(5) Οὐ παρὰ τὸ δαίμονας εἶναι—ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὸ δειμαίνειν, ὅτι φοβεῖσθαι καὶ ἐκφοβεῖν, δαίμονας τινὰς προσφῶς ὀνομαζέσθαι.  
Euseb. Præp. Evang. Lib. 4. Cap. 5. p. 142. Edit. Vigeri.

In

## 8      A   D I S S E R T A T I O N

In the gospels, wherein is the most frequent mention of demoniacs, the same that are named *demons* are named also *spirits*, and *unclean spirits*, and *evil and wicked spirits*. So St. Matthew (XII. 43, 45.) and St. Luke (XI. 24, 26.) “ When the unclean  
 “ spirit is gone out of a man,—he taketh  
 “ to him seven other spirits more wicked  
 “ than himself.” There was in the syna-  
 gogue, “ a man with an unclean spirit;”  
 faith St. Mark (I. 23, &c.) “ which had a  
 “ spirit of an unclean demon,” faith St.  
 Luke; (IV. 33, &c.) “ And when the un-  
 “ clean spirit had torn him, he came out  
 “ of him,” faith St. Mark; “ And when  
 “ the demon had thrown him in the midst,  
 “ he came out of him,” faith St. Luke:  
 and in both the whole is concluded with  
 this just reflection of all the spectators;  
 “ What thing is this? What a word is  
 “ this? for with authority and power he  
 “ commandeth the unclean spirits, and they  
 “ do obey him.” When our Saviour called  
 his twelve disciples, as St. Matthew relates  
 it, (X. 1.) “ he gave them power over un-  
 “ clean spirits, and to heal all manner of  
 “ sickness

" sickness and all manner of disease ;" the same thing is thus expressed by St. Luke, (IX. 1.) " he gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases."

What in St. Mark is *unclean spirits*, (III. 11.)

" And unclean spirits, when they saw him,

" fell down before him, and cried saying,

" Thou art the Son of God," in St. Luke

is *demons*, (IV. 41.) " And demons also

" came out of many, crying out and saying

" Thou art the Christ, the Son of God,"

What in St. Matthew (XVII. 18.) is a *demon*,

in St. Mark (IX. 25.) is a *foul spirit*, and

*dumb and deaf spirit*; and in the parallel

place of St. Luke (IX. 42.) is termed both

a *demon* and *unclean spirit*. St. Luke in the

same breath as it were speaketh of *evil spirits*

and *demons* as being the same, (VIII. 2.)

" And certain women, which had been

" healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary

" called Magdalene, out of whom went

" seven demons." St. Matthew in like

manner, (VIII. 16.) " When the even was

" come, they brought unto him many that

" were possessed with demons, and he cast

" out the spirits with his word." In the

C

story



story of the Syro-phenician woman's daughter  
 (Mark IX. 25, 26.) what is denominated  
*an unclean spirit*, is called immediately after-  
 wards *a demon*; " A certain woman, whose  
 " youngest daughter had an unclean spirit,  
 " heard of him, and came and fell at his  
 " feet, (The woman was a Greek, a Syro-  
 " phenician by nation) and she besought  
 " him that he would cast forth the demon  
 " out of her daughter." Other instances  
 might be collected, but these are sufficient  
 to show that *demons* and *spirits*, and *foul and*  
*unclean spirits*, and *evil and wicked spirits*  
 are synonymous terms, and are used pro-  
 miscuously to denote the same beings. It  
 farther appears too, that *demons* are beings  
 of the same kind, of the same nature as  
*Satan* and *Beelzebub*, the prince or chief of  
 the demons. For by our Saviour's argumen-  
 tation, when he was accused of casting out  
 demons by Beelzebub the prince or chief of  
 the demons, (Matt. XII. 22—32. Mark III.  
 22—30. Luke XI. 14—26.), it is plain to  
 demonstration, that casting out *demons* is  
 casting out *Satan*, that casting out demons  
 by *Beelzebub* is opposed to casting out demons  
 by



by *the Spirit of God*, that casting out demons by *Beelzebub* is the same as casting out demons by *Satan*, that *Satan's* casting out *demons* is casting out *himself*, that *Satan* and *Beelzebub* are the same, that the *demons*, and *Satan* and *Beelzebub* the prince or chief of the *demons* are beings of the same nature, and differ only in order and degree. When the Seventy returned to our Saviour, (Luke X. 17, 18.) "saying, Lord even the demons are subject unto us through thy name;" he considered the fall of *demons* as the fall of *Satan*, as another fall of angels, "I beheld *Satan* as lightning fall from heaven." St. Peter speaketh of the demoniacs under the name and notion of "oppressed with the devil," ὑπο τῆς διαβολῆς, when he told Cornelius the Centurion, (Acts X. 38.) "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him." He mentions this as one of the greatest exertions of divine goodness and power. It is evident then, that these *wicked and unclean spirits*, these *demons* and the prince

or *chief of the demons* are not the souls of men or women deceased, but are really and truly *the devil and his angels*: and consequently that the word *demons* is justly and properly translated *devils*, especially throughout the gospels.

II. Having seen what kind of beings these demons are, let us now inquire what sorts of distempers were usually attributed to their influence and operation. Saul's disorder is expressly ascribed to this cause. (1 Sam. XVI. 14.) "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." Josephus too in his relation of this case often mentions the demon or demons as agitating and disturbing him. His case appears plainly to have been of the atribilarious or melancholy kind; and according to (6) Rambam, the Jews call every kind of melancholy an evil spirit.

Melancholy and madness are nearly allied, and this disorder also was supposed to proceed from possession by an evil spirit.

(6) See Lightfoot. Hebrew Exercitations on Luke XIII. 11, Vol. 2. p. 442.

The Jews said of our Saviour, (John X. 20.) "He hath a devil, and is mad," considering the former as the cause, and the latter as the effect. Several actions of the demoniacs show evidently that they were also madmen; the same symptoms are discoverable in both. Take for example (Mark V. 1, &c. Luke VIII. 26, &c.) "the man who  
 "ware no cloaths, neither abode in any  
 "house, but had his dwelling among the  
 "tombs, and no man could bind him, no  
 "not with chains: because that he had  
 "been often bound with fetters and chains,  
 "and the chains had been plucked asunder  
 "by him, and the fetters broken in pieces,  
 "neither could any man tame him; and  
 "always night and day he was in the  
 "mountains and in the tombs, crying and  
 "cutting himself with stones." Here are all the strongest marks of the fiercest and most raging frenzy; but when the devils were departed out of him, we find him  
 "sitting at the feet of Jesus, cloathed and  
 "in his right mind," as St. Mark and St. Luke both relate it. The expulsion of  
 the



the evil spirits was likewise the cure of his madness.

Epilepsy is another disease which, as well as madness, was imputed to the agency of evil spirits. We have a most remarkable case of this kind in the gospels, (Matt. XVII. 14—21. Mark IX. 17—29. Luke IX. 38—42.) where all the symptoms are described as particularly and as exactly as they could be by a skilful physician. St. Matthew describes him thus, “ He is lunatic and fore vexed, for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.” He is called *a lunatic*, as his fits might be better or worse according to the course and changes of the moon, which as physicians observe is not unusual in this distemper. St. Luke thus represents him, “ Lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out, and it teareth him, that he foameth again, and bruising him, hardly departeth from him.” St. Mark is more copious, “ Wheresoever the spirit taketh him, he teareth him, and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away. This came unto him of a child, and oft-times



" times it hath cast him into the fire, and  
 " into the waters, to destroy him." When  
 he was brought unto our Saviour, " strait-  
 " way the spirit tare him, and he fell on  
 " the ground, and wallowed foaming." A  
 patient truly to be pitied, and hard to be  
 cured: but upon Jesus saying unto the  
 spirit, " I charge thee come out of him,  
 " and enter no more into him, the spirit  
 " cried, and rent him sore, and came out  
 " of him; and he was as one dead, inso-  
 " much that many said He is dead; but  
 " Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted  
 " him up, and he arose." The malady  
 was occasioned by the inhabitation of an  
 evil spirit, and the ejection of that spirit  
 was the remedy. The cause ceasing, the  
 effect ceased too.

Other disorders were ascribed to demons  
 or evil spirits besides the fore-mentioned of  
 melancholy and madness and epilepsy.  
 Job's disease, which seemeth to have been  
 cuticular, of the leprous and ulcerous kind  
 to a very great degree, is said to have been  
 inflicted by Satan through the permission of  
 God. (Job II. 7.) " So went Satan forth  
 " from

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“ from the presence of the Lord, and smote  
 “ Job with fore boils from the sole of his  
 “ foot unto his crown.” Satan is also repre-  
 sented as the cause and author of the crook-  
 ed woman’s infirmity in the gospel. (Luke  
 XIII. 11, &c.) “ And behold, there was  
 “ a woman which had a spirit of infirmity  
 “ eighteen years, and was bowed together,  
 “ and could in no wise lift up herself. And  
 “ when Jesus saw her, he called her to him,  
 “ and said unto her, Woman, thou art  
 “ loosed from thine infirmity : And he laid  
 “ his hands on her ; and immediately she  
 “ was made strait, and glorified God.” A  
*spirit of infirmity* may be thought an ambi-  
 guous indeterminate expression, but the  
 meaning of it is limited and ascertained,  
 when this *spirit* is explained immediately  
 afterwards to be *Satan* (“ whom Satan hath  
 “ bound, lo, these eighteen years”) ὁ Σατανᾶς  
 with the article, the great enemy and ad-  
 versary of mankind. There are also de-  
 moniacs in the gospel, who yet discover not  
 the least tokens or signs of madness. They  
 were blind and dumb, but the blindness and  
 dumbness are attributed to the possession of  
 evil

evil spirits, and the recovery to their ejection. (Matt. IX. 32, 33.) “ As they  
 “ went out, behold, they brought unto  
 “ him a dumb man possessed with a demon :  
 “ And when the demon was cast out, the  
 “ dumb spake ; and the multitudes marvel-  
 “ ed, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.”  
 (Matt. XII. 21.) “ Then was brought  
 “ unto him one possessed with a demon,  
 “ blind and dumb ; and he healed him, in-  
 “ somuch that the blind and dumb both  
 “ spake and saw.”

But not all such disorders did the Jews ascribe to demons or evil spirits, but those only which were beside the common course of nature, and attended with extraordinary symptoms. Madness itself is sometimes spoken of by its usual name, without being assigned to any supernatural cause. Solomon mentions (Prov. XXVI. 18.) “ a mad  
 “ man who casteth firebrands arrows and  
 “ death.” Of St. Paul it is said (Acts XXVI. 24.) that “ he was beside himself,  
 “ much learning had made him mad.” Our Saviour’s relations said of him also (Mark III. 21, 22.) “ He is beside himself ;”

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but



but they did not say, as the scribes did at the same time, "He hath Beelzebub;" the former putting a favorable, the latter a most malicious construction upon his actions. So just and true is the observation of Grotius and of our Lightfoot. Grotius (7) explains the word *demoniacs* to signify not common madmen, but such as were seized and agitated by the forcible violence of unclean spirits. Lightfoot (8) remarks, that it was usual with the Jews to attribute to evil spirits some of the more grievous diseases, especially those, wherein either the body was convulsed and distorted, or the mind was disturbed and agitated by frenzy.

Neither were the Jews singular in this belief; other ancient nations entertained similar opinions. Dr. Hyde hath fully evinced it with regard to the Chaldæans and Per-

(7) *δαίμονιοι*, non quovis modo insanientes, sed impurorum spirituum vi majore correptos atque agitados. Grot. in Matt. IV. 24.

(8) Lightfoot. Hebrew Exercitations on Matt. XVII. 15. Vol. 2. p. 211.

(9) *Medica Sacra* in Dr. Stack's translation. Cap. 9. At non Judæis tantum, sed et aliis etiam gentibus, in usu fuit insanos pro *δαίμονια* habere. Hinc apud Herodotum (Lib. 6. Cap. 84.) rex Cleomenes dicitur non ab ullo *δαίμονιο* ad insaniam redactus, sed consuetudine cum Scythis ebriosus fuisse,

Persians in his learned history of the religion of the ancient Persians. The Greeks and Romans called insane persons δαιμονοληπτοι, νυμφοληπτοι, *Lymphatici*, *Larvati*, *Cerriti*, *Bacchantes* and the like; as if the demons, or the nymphs, or the Larvæ, or Ceres, or Bacchus were the authors of their calamities, tho' what notions they had framed of these different beings we cannot tell, very imperfect ones we may be certain. The epilepsy as well as madness was called *morbus sacer* a *sacred disease*, as if it were caused by some divine power. As Dr. Mead (9) in treating of the demoniacs observes, "this custom of taking madmen for demoniacs was not so peculiar to the Jews, but that it prevailed in other nations also. Hence in Herodotus king Cleomenes is said to be driven into mad-

*fuisse, et inde furiosus.* Cumque δαίμονα idem significet ac δαίμονιον ἔχειν, hoc verbo pro *furere* utitur Xenophon. (*Memorabil. Lib. 1.*) Quin et Aristophanes de eodem morbo gravius urgente vocem κακοδαίμονι usurpat, et deterimum insanix gradum non μανίαν, sed κακοδαίμονιαν esse pronunciat. (Vide Plutum, *Act. 2. Scen. 3. ver. 38. et Act. 2. Scen. 5. ver. 15.*) Hinc etiam, ut notat Aretæus, *sacer* apud illos dictus est hic morbus, quoniam dæmon aliquis in hominem ingressus putabatur. (δια της δοξῆς δαίμονος εἰς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους εἰσόδου.)  
 \* De causis morbi diuturn. *Lib. 1. Cap. 4.*)

“ nefs, not by any demon, but by a habit  
 “ of drunkennefs, which he had contracted  
 “ among the Scythians, whereby he be-  
 “ came frantic. And whereas δαιμοναυ fig-  
 “ nifies the fame thing as δαιμονιον εχειν,  
 “ Xenophon uses this word for *furere*, to  
 “ be raging mad or furious. Moreover  
 “ Ariftophanes, intending to exprefs a high  
 “ degree of the fame difeafe, employs the  
 “ word κακοδαιμοναυ, and calls the higheft  
 “ degree of madnefs, not μανιαυ, but κακο-  
 “ δαιμονιαυ. Hence alfo, as Aretæus ob-  
 “ ferves, this difeafe was called morbus  
 “ facer, or the facred difeafe, *because it was*  
 “ *imagined that fome demon had entered into*  
 “ *the man.*” The Heathens therefore as  
 well as the Jews attributed thefe diforders  
 to demons, the Jews by demons under-  
 ftanding evil fpirits or devils, the Heathens  
 fome beings, they knew not what, fuperior  
 to mortal men. In fhort, certain difeafes,  
 which the ancients afcribed to fupernatural  
 caufes, many of the moderns affect to con-  
 fider as natural effects.

III. The great queftion therefore is, and  
 the moft difficult to be refolved, whether  
 the



the modern or ancient opinion is more agreeable to truth and reason, whether these kinds of diseases were any ways owing to evil spirits, or may be deduced altogether from natural causes. One would not willingly encourage superstition, *δεισιδαιμονίαν* as the word is in Greek, the dread of demons, and fearing where no fear is; but at the same time one would as carefully avoid the other extreme of scepticism and infidelity, doubting of every thing, and believing nothing but what may be seen, and proved even to demonstration. It betrays great weakness as well as great laziness in men to be too remiss in investigating the causes of things, and what they cannot readily comprehend and easily explain, without seeking farther to refer immediately to some superior being as the cause and author; but on the other hand it argues as great vanity and presumption to pretend to know all causes, and to reduce all effects to their first principles, as if nothing was above their level and comprehension. Some causes may perhaps lie within the sphere of our knowledge; but many more, I am afraid, are far above  
and

and beyond our utmost reach and compass. The effects are seen and felt and observed by all men, but the causes lie deeper and more remote, and cannot often be traced up like a river to the spring-head.

All causes may not improperly be reduced to two kinds, material and spiritual. Now the philosophy of the present times inclines, as I conceive, to attribute too much to the former and too little to the latter. But matter is a dull dead lifeless thing, is always passive and (strictly speaking) never active, cannot of itself put itself into motion, or lay itself at rest, and much less can it be the proper and efficient cause of any thing. Men may talk of the powers of matter, but it hath really no power, except what the philosophers term the *vis inertiae*, the power of inertness, the power of doing nothing of itself. There is not a single phenomenon in the material world, there is not a single motion or affection of matter, that can be accounted for any more than attraction and gravity itself, without having recourse to some spiritual agent. Most of the causes and effects which we are acquainted with are but  
so

so many different modifications of matter, but all these different modifications are effected not by matter itself but by spirit. Matter at best can be regarded only as a secondary, and not as a primary cause; the first mover must be of a higher class and order of beings. It appears then that in the material world itself the first the principal agent is spirit; and what then must it be in the world of spirits?

It is certain, there are many more spiritual beings in the world, than men commonly are aware of, or generally conceive. We see all the parts of nature full of life in the visible world around us, and we may with reason therefore conclude the case to be the same in the invisible world above us. The earth, the sea, the air, and not only all the greater but all the lesser portions of them, as far as we can perceive, are abundantly stocked with inhabitants; many of them come under our inspection, by the help of glasses we discover more: but who can tell what numbers escape our observation, which no eye no glasses can reach? There are many kinds of beings plainly inferior to  
man



man, but there must be many more superior to him. The scale of beings cannot stop at such an imperfect creature as man, but must rise higher and higher towards perfection, the space and interval above us being infinitely greater than that beneath us. We can hardly enumerate the different sorts and species of creatures upon earth; and much less can we frame any adequate conception of the different degrees and orders of spirits in the heavens, whose variety is infinite, and being spirits they are not immediate objects of sense, nor visible to human eyes. Milton delivered the sentiment of all antiquity as well as his own, when he said

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the  
earth

Unseen, both when we wake, and when  
we sleep.

Two of the greatest and wisest of the ancient philosophers, Thales and Pythagoras (1),  
affirm

(1) Τον κοσμον δαιμονων πληρη. Thales apud Diog. Laert. p. 18. ειναι δε παντα τον αιρα ψυχων εμπλεον. Pythag. ibid. p. 587. Edit. Henr. Steph. 1514.

(2) Υπο τελων περιπεσθαι ανθρωποις τως τε ονειρας, και τα ζημια νοστις και υγιειας. Pyth. ibid.

(3) Cor-

affirm that the world and air are full of demons and souls. The scripture in like manner represents the air as the habitation of demons ; and the devil is therefore stiled (Eph. II. 2.) “ the prince of the power of “ the air,” and his angels are denominated (Eph. VI. 12.) “ spiritual wickedness,” or as it is in the margin, “ wicked spirits in “ high places.”

So many demons and spirits, hovering and wandering about in the air, must by their natural abilities have the power of doing much hurt to the souls and bodies of men, unless restrained by the good providence of God. He, we may be confident, will not suffer one part of his creation to break loose upon another ; but he may upon occasion make use of some of his creatures as instruments of the punishment of others. Pythagoras speaking of demons in the place above-mentioned (2) says, that ‘ by these dreams ‘ are sent to men, and the prognostics of ‘ health and sickness.’ Tertullian likewise (3) asserts,

(3) Corporibus quidem et valetudines infligunt et aliquos casus acerbos, animæ vero repentinos et extraordinarios per vim excessus. Suppetit illis ad utramque substantiam ho-  
E minis

asserts, that ‘ they inflict grievous diseases  
 ‘ on the body, and excite sudden and vio-  
 ‘ lent commotions in the soul ; for by the  
 ‘ subtlety and fineness of their nature they  
 ‘ have access to either substance of man.  
 ‘ They can do much by their spiritual  
 ‘ powers, so that being invisible and im-  
 ‘ perceptible to sense they appear rather in  
 ‘ effect than in their act.’ Lactantius de-  
 scribes their operations much after the same  
 manner (4), that ‘ being spirits not to be  
 ‘ seen or felt they insinuate themselves into  
 ‘ the bodies of men, and secretly working  
 ‘ within vitiate their health, excite diseases,  
 ‘ terrify their minds with dreams,’ and the  
 like. Cyprian ascribes the like effects to  
 them (5), ‘ they disturb life, disquiet  
 ‘ sleep, and creeping secretly into the bodies  
 ‘ of men terrify their minds, distort their  
 ‘ limbs, destroy their health, and provoke  
 ‘ diseases.’ More testimonies might be cited  
 to

*minis adeundam subtilitas et tenuitas sua. Multum spiritalibus viribus licet ut invisibiles et insensibiles in affectu potius quam in actu suo appareant. Tertul. Apol. cap. 22. p. 21. Edit. Rigaltii. Paris. 1675.*

(4) Qui quoniam sunt spiritus tenues et incomprehensibiles, insinuant se corporibus hominum, et occulte in visceribus



to this purpose ; and indeed they who deny all power and influence of angels demons and spirits over the bodies and souls of men, contradict the general belief of mankind as well as the whole tenor of revelation. If the existence of such beings is admitted, their power cannot be denied, the one is so plain a consequence from the other.

But though possibly they may have the power of doing these things, yet what reason is there to think, or how doth it appear, that they ever exercised it ? It was, I suppose, the great difficulty of discovering the causes and applying the remedies to certain diseases, which induced men to look higher, and to regard them as the productions of evil spirits. They were for referring them to such causes, because they were incapable of discerning other causes, and could not any other ways account for such effects. If indeed things can be sufficiently explained

*ceribus operati valetudinem vitiant, morbos citant, somnii, animos terrent &c. Lactant. Lib. 2. Cap. 14.*

(5) *Vitam turbant, somnos inquietant, irrepentes etiam in corporibus occulte mentes terrent, membra distorquent, valetudinem frangunt, morbos laessant. Cypr. de Idol. Vanit. p. 10. Edit. Felli. Oxon.*

upon natural principles, we should not have recourse to supernatural. If we can by any means untie the knot ourselves, we should not bring in a demon to cut it. But are then the causes of melancholy, of madness, of epilepsy and the like so well known and understood, that we can point them out in each particular case, and mark the distinction between them? We may know the symptoms the concomitants and effects, we may in some measure be able to administer remedies; but who can fully explain the spring and source of these distempers, generally incurable by all the skill and art of man; what it is that produces this crasis of the blood and humors, or how it is that this crasis of the blood and humors excites such horrid convulsions in the body, such extravagant fancies in the mind? Madness in particular seemeth almost as inexplicable as dreaming. In a former dissertation I attempted to show the extreme difficulty, if not utter impossibility, of accounting for the phenomenon of dreaming, by the principles of mere matter and motion, without recurring to the agency of some spirit: and  
may

may not madness be considered as waking dreams, and dreams as sleeping madness? Very little indeed it is that we can discover of the true cause and origin of things. We know that such and such things are, but we know not how they are, or what is their real essence and constitution. Those events which we call natural are such as fall out according to the common course of nature; but we are as little able to account for the common and ordinary, as for the singular and extraordinary productions of nature. (Eccles. XI. 5.) "As thou knowest not what  
 "is the way of the spirit, nor how the  
 "bones do grow in the womb of her that is  
 "with child, even so thou knowest not the  
 "works of God who maketh all." Since then our knowledge is so very deficient, and we can so seldom say *This* is the cause, we cannot always be certain *That* is not the cause. We cannot give any clear and rational explication of the malignity and incurableness of certain diseases, and how then can we be confident that they are no ways owing to the operation of evil spirits? May not the same effect proceed from different causes;



## A DISSERTATION

causes; and what is usually produced in the ordinary course of nature, may it not be sometimes effected by the interposition of an extraordinary power? Such an interposition indeed we should not admit merely upon supposition, nor because we think it possible, conclude it therefore to be probable. We should have some better warrant and authority, and what better warrant and authority can we desire than a divine revelation? Things may be or may not be wrought by evil spirits, for what we can tell; but surely we may with reason believe them to be wrought by evil spirits, when they appear to be so from the things themselves transcending all human powers, and moreover when they are affirmed to be so by express testimonies of holy writ.

Dr. Mead, who was for attributing as much to material, and as little to spiritual causes, as a less reasonable man could do, in his *Medica Sacra* thus freely delivers his sentiments on this head; (6) “ I am not  
“ ignorant that the Jews, by a manner of  
“ expression familiar among them, are

(6) *Medica Sacra*, cap. 3. in Dr. Stack's translation.

“ wont

wont to ascribe diseases of this kind to  
the power of evil angels as ministers of  
God; and that even at this day some  
very learned men may defend the same  
notion. But for my part, if I may be  
allowed to declare my thoughts with free-  
dom, I cannot think it right to have re-  
course to the divine wrath for diseases,  
which can be proved to have natural  
causes; unless it be expressly declared,  
that they were sent down directly from  
heaven. For if they fall on us in punish-  
ment of our sins, the intention of the  
supreme lawgiver would be frustrated,  
unless a sure rule was given, whereby  
his vengeance might be distinguished  
from common events; in as much as the  
innocent may be equal sharers in such  
calamities with the guilty. Moreover it  
seems reasonable to believe, that evils in-  
flicted by the omnipotent judge must be  
either incurable, or curable by himself  
alone; that the connection of his power  
with his equity may the more brightly  
shine forth. By such a criterion are mi-  
raculous works distinguished from the  
operations

“operations of nature.” And is not this precisely the case of the demoniacs and others in the scripture? They are expressly declared to have been actuated and afflicted by evil spirits; their cases are sufficiently distinguished from common events, and were either incurable or curable only by a divine power.

IV. Let us then take a nearer view of the demoniacs in the gospels, and see whether they do not come within this description. Those who maintain that these possessions were nothing more than natural diseases, have not gained any honor or credit by the company they keep: for as Dr. Hutchinson, the learned editor of some part of Xenophon's works, observes in a (7) sermon upon this subject, “Pomponatius, Vaninus, “Hobbs, Spinoza, and Bekker especially, “have all patronised the same opinion,” all of them profane and atheistical writers. A very different man is produced as a favorer likewise of this opinion, Mr. Mede, and Dr. Mead glories (as well he might) in his

(7) The usual interpretation of *δαίμονες* and *δαίμονα* in the New Testament asserted in a Sermon before the university of Oxford, p. 30. 1738.



relation to him, one of the most learned judicious and able of all our divines, whose single authority would weigh more with me than that of many other others, being among the first of my capital and favorite authors. His sixth discourse is cited for this purpose: but his notions, as I conceive, have been very much misunderstood, or very much misrepresented. For though he might allow demoniacs to be the same as madmen and lunatics, yet he looked upon this madness as caused by evil spirits; and not only so, but moreover believed that persons might be so possessed and actuated at this time. He says (8) indeed, that "these demoniacs were no other than such as we call madmen and lunatics, at least that we comprehend them under those names, and that therefore" (observe what follows) "they both *still* are, and in *all times and places* have been much more frequent than we imagin." Again he says, "Such as these, I say, the Jews believed (and so may we) to be troubled

(8) Mede's Works, Disc. VI. p. 29 & 30. and 636. Edit. 1672.

“ with evil spirits, as it is said of Saul’s  
 “ melancholy that *an evil spirit from the*  
 “ *Lord troubled him.*” He says afterwards,  
 “ If those were not such as we now a-days  
 “ conceive of no otherwise than as mad-  
 “ men, surely the world must be supposed  
 “ to be very well rid of devils over it hath  
 “ been; *which for my part I believe not.*”  
 And in another part of his works he asserts  
 the word *demons*, in the gospels especi-  
 ally, to signify *devils*. “ The use of the  
 “ word *demon* in the worst sense, or directly  
 “ for a *devil*, will be almost confined to the  
 “ gospels, where the subject spoken of be-  
 “ ing *men vexed with evil spirits could admit*  
 “ *no other sense nor use.*” It is evident then  
 that Mr. Mede was so far from falling short  
 in belief, that he carried it farther than the  
 generality of Christian Divines do. But I  
 would not therefore affirm that all madmen  
 are demoniacs, any more than I would, that  
 all demoniacs are madmen. The symp-  
 toms and effects of melancholy, of mad-  
 ness, of epilepsy and the like, whether in  
 the natural way as it is called, or by demo-  
 niacal possession, may be so much alike, so  
 much

much the same, that we may not be able clearly to distinguish and point out which is the proper cause: but we may determine with some kind of certainty, when the possession is strongly marked by some circumstances more than natural, and the truth and reality of it are farther confirmed to us by the most creditable authors, whom we have all the reason in the world to believe to be divinely inspired.

Of Saul's disease we should not have known the real cause, if the sacred historian had not informed us that it was *an evil spirit*, and that in such a manner that it cannot be mistaken. For when Saul was anointed king (1 Sam. X. 9, 10.) "the Spirit of God came upon him, and gave him another heart." But when by his sins he had forfeited God's favor, it is said (1 Sam. XVI. 14.) that "the Spirit of the Lord departed from him, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." We see the one is plainly opposed to the other; the one is a name or quality only no more than the other; the one is a fictitious being no more than the other; both are real agents, *the*

F 2 *evil*



*evil spirit* as well as *the Spirit of the Lord*. But it is asked, What connection is there between musical instruments, and devils or evil spirits? How can sounds and symphonies have the power of removing or chasing away an evil spirit? For by David's playing upon the harp (ver. 23.) "Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." But when the distemper is much the same, whether occasioned by demoniacal or by natural means, why may not music have the power of relieving and refreshing men in the one case as well as in the other? Why may not music have the power of affecting a spirit as well as matter, of diverting and changing the thoughts of the mind as well as the humors of the body? It should seem that the spirit must be first affected; for if the mind be wholly inattentive, or otherwise engaged and employed, the most heavenly music is as nothing, and can produce no kind of effect upon the body.

The true state of the demoniacs is seen more fully in the gospels. Our blessed Saviour and his disciples all along speak of them

them as persons really possessed, and that in so plain a manner as cannot easily be mistaken. St. Luke, who was himself a physician, and consequently knew how to distinguish natural diseases from others, maketh use of the same language, and his stile and manner of writing are much commended by the most learned of the same profession. (9) Dr. Mead says of him, that as a physician he well understood the force and meaning of words; and Dr. Freind for the same reason observes that “his language is more simple, and more correct, as well as more physical,” than that of the other evangelists: And yet he is as full and copious, as exact and particular in his account of the demoniacs, as any of them. It is true indeed, when an inveterate disease is cured instantly by a word’s speaking, the cure must certainly be miraculous, and owing to the interposition of a divine power, whatever may have been the cause of the disease, whether it arose from natural

(6) Mead. Medic. Sacra. Cap. 15. p. 107. Freind’s Hist. of Physic, Vol. I. p. 224.

means,

*evil spirit* as well as *the Spirit of the Lord*. But it is asked, What connection is there between musical instruments, and devils or evil spirits? How can sounds and symphonies have the power of removing or chasing away an evil spirit? For by David's playing upon the harp (ver. 23.) "Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." But when the distemper is much the same, whether occasioned by demoniacal or by natural means, why may not music have the power of relieving and refreshing men in the one case as well as in the other? Why may not music have the power of affecting a spirit as well as matter, of diverting and changing the thoughts of the mind as well as the humors of the body? It should seem that the spirit must be first affected; for if the mind be wholly inattentive, or otherwise engaged and employed, the most heavenly music is as nothing, and can produce no kind of effect upon the body.

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(6) Mead. Medic. Sac. Cap. 15. p. 107. Freind’s Hist. of Physic, Vol. I. p. 224.

means,

means, or proceeded from the influence of evil spirits : but of the two it should seem a more difficult and arduous province, more great and godlike to dispossess evil spirits, than to cure common diseases. A distinction too is made between *the curing of diseases* and *the casting out of devils*, as if they were different kinds of operations, and the one much harder to be performed than the other. In St. Matthew's gospel we read, (VIII. 16.) that " when the even was come, they  
 " brought unto him many that were possess-  
 " ed with devils ; and he cast out the spirits  
 " with his word, and healed all that were  
 " sick." In the parallel place of St. Mark we read, (I. 32, 34.) that " at even, when  
 " the sun did set, they brought unto him  
 " all that were diseased, and them that were  
 " possessed with devils ; and he healed many  
 " that were sick of divers diseases, and cast  
 " out many devils." Here is as manifest a distinction made between *healing* and *casting out* as between *diseases* and *devils* : but the distinction is marked still more strongly in the parallel place of St. Luke, (IV. 40, 41.)  
 " Now when the sun was setting, all they  
 " that

“ that had any sick with divers diseases,  
 “ brought them unto him ; and he laid his  
 “ hands on every one of them, and healed  
 “ them ; And devils also came out of many,  
 “ crying out and saying, Thou art Christ  
 “ the Son of God.” Would any physician  
 or correct writer have expressed himself after  
 this manner, if nothing more had been in-  
 tended than the healing of common diseases ?  
 Common diseases, such as the leprosy and  
 palsy and the like, are said to be *cleansed*  
 and *healed*, but are never said to be *cast out*,  
 and to *come out crying and saying* any thing.  
 When our Saviour had called unto him his  
 twelve disciples, (Matt. X. 1, 8.) “ he gave  
 “ unto them power against unclean spirits  
 “ to cast them out, and to heal all manner  
 “ of sickness and all manner of diseases :”  
 and among his other directions he gave them  
 the following, “ Heal the sick, cleanse the  
 “ lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils.”  
 “ He ordained twelve,” saith St. Mark (III.  
 14, 15.) “ that they should be with him,  
 “ and that he might send them forth to  
 “ preach, and to have power to heal sick-  
 “ nesses, and to cast out devils :” and it is  
 said



said afterwards (VI. 13.) that “ they cast out  
 “ many devils, and anointed with oil many  
 “ that were sick, and healed them.” When  
 our Saviour had sent forth his seventy disciples to heal the sick, and to preach the kingdom of God, (Luke X. 17.) “ they  
 “ returned again with joy, saying, Lord,  
 “ even the devils are subject unto us through  
 “ thy name ;” as if this was the highest instance of power, and far beyond what they could have expected. In his last commission to his disciples our Saviour still preserves the same distinction, (Mark XVI. 17, 18.) “ In  
 “ my name shall they cast out devils,—they  
 “ shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall  
 “ recover.”

But it is pretended, that in this manner of speaking our Saviour complied only with the customary language of his country, it being no part of his commission, nor the design of the sacred writers, to correct mistakes in physic, any more than in astronomy or any other science. But the cases are vastly different. This or that system of astronomy, whether true or false, whether the Copernican or Ptolemaic or any other, hath no kind of

of influence upon Christian faith and practice. Whether the sun or earth be at rest, it maketh no difference to us, we have still the same race to run, the same goal to reach, and the same prize set before us of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. But mistaken notions of demons or devils may much affect our religious and moral character, may fill our minds with vain terrors and superstitions, debase and corrupt our morals as well as our understandings, and prove the source of infinite calamity and misery here and hereafter. A more plausible argument may be drawn from the story of the blind man in St. John's gospel, (IX. 1, 2, 3.) " As Jesus  
 " passed by, he saw a man, which was  
 " blind from his birth : And his disciples  
 " asked him saying, Master, who did sin,  
 " this man or his parents, that he was born  
 " blind ? Jesus answered, Neither hath this  
 " man sinned, nor his parents ; but that  
 " the works of God should be made mani-  
 " fested in him." We see, the disciples had a notion, as many of the Jews then had, of a state of existence prior to this life ; and our Saviour seemeth to allow it, at least

doth not refute and rectify it : but as we have no remembrance, no consciousness of our former existence, it is all one to us whether there be such a state or not ; it is a matter merely of speculation, and no way relates to practice : and some ingenious Christian divines as well as some learned Heathen philosophers have entertained the same opinion, I will not say truly, but yet very innocently, and without any prejudice to religion. — Whereas we can neither with innocence nor with safety attribute powers to devils which they have not, nor take from them what they really have : and it is not easy to say which of the two may expose us to greater evils and dangers. (1 John III. 8.)

“ For this purpose the Son of God was  
 “ manifested, that he might destroy the  
 “ works of the devil :” but it is enlarging and adding to the works of the devil, if he never had such a power, to ascribe to him the power of influencing and possessing the souls and bodies of men. Next in power and goodness to the casting of real devils out of the bodies, would have been the destroying and rooting of this false notion  
 out



out of the minds of men. If it had been impossible to overcome the prejudices of the people, yet our Saviour might, either by himself or by the Holy Ghost afterwards, have disclosed the truth to his disciples. His goodness would hardly have suffered them to remain in so pernicious an error.

But our Saviour was so far from reproving or correcting this notion, that he hath confirmed and established it beyond all reasonable contradiction. He was so far from giving other instructions to his disciples, that he hath said and done more than enough to convince them of the reality of these possessions. When he had called his twelve disciples, (Matt. X. 1.) “ he gave “ them power against unclean spirits to “ cast them out,” and he gave it besides in commission to them (ver. 8.) “ to cast out “ devils:” and would he have given such a power and such a commission, if there had been no devils to cast out, and the whole had been a vain imagination? When he had sent forth the seventy disciples, and they (Luke X. 17.) “ returned again with joy, “ saying, Lord even the devils are subject

“ unto us through thy name,” he was so far from repressing their joy, that he rather encouraged it, and fixed it upon its proper foundation. (ver. 18, 19, 20.) “ I beheld  
 “ Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Be-  
 “ hold, I give unto you power to tread on  
 “ serpents and scorpions, and over all the  
 “ power of the enemy; and nothing shall  
 “ by any means hurt you. Notwithstand-  
 “ ing in this rejoice not, that the spirits are  
 “ subject unto you; but rather rejoice, be-  
 “ cause your names are written in heaven.”

But what is the sense or meaning of all this phraseology, if nothing more was performed than some cures of epilepsy and madness? How can the healing of the falling sickness be said to be *the fall of Satan* from his power and dominion? How can the curing of bodily diseases be said to be *the subjection of the spirits*, and a victory and triumph over all the power of the enemy? Our Saviour often commands the unclean spirits to come out of a man: “ Hold thy peace, (Luke IV. 35.) “ and come out of him:” but where is the reason or propriety of this command, if there were no spirits to come out,

out, and only some distemper to be cured? When the Jews charged our Saviour "with  
 "having a devil," (John VIII. 48.) he denies the charge indeed, and disproves it: but upon this supposition the shorter and better answer would have been, that there was no such possession, there was no such thing as *having a devil*. In like manner, when the pharisees accused him (Matt. XII. 24.) of "casting out devils by the prince of  
 "the devils;" the proper reply would have been to have denied the principle instead of refuting it, and directly to have told the truth, if it had been the truth, that the devil was not in the least concerned one way or other: but he admits the truth of his casting out devils, and only exposes the unreasonableness and absurdity of imputing it to the prince of the devils. And would he have employed so many arguments upon a subject that had not the least foundation in truth or the nature of things? Would he have attempted to prove the truth of his divine mission from a false chimæra, from a thing that was not? Would he have argued upon the reality of his casting out devils, if  
 it



it had been only a vulgar notion, an idle dream, a wild fancy, and no reality in it; or have pretended, that he “cast out devils  
 “by the Spirit of God,” and that therefore “the kingdom of God was come?” The devil that was cast out might have reasoned in this manner; but not He, who is emphatically styled (John XIV. 6.) “the  
 “way, and the truth, and the life.”

Besides, if the demoniacs were mere madmen and lunatics, how came they to be so much better and so much earlier acquainted with our Lord's true character and office, than the generality of the people, or even the disciples themselves? His fame indeed went abroad, but his real state and condition were little known and understood; while we find the demoniacs publicly proclaiming him to be “the Christ, the Holy  
 “One of God, the Son of the most High  
 “God.” He had but newly entered on his ministry, when according to St. Mark (I. 23, 24.) “there was in the synagogue  
 “a man with an unclean spirit; and he  
 “cried out, saying, Let us alone; what  
 “have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of  
 “Nazareth?

“ Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us?

“ I know thee who thou art, the Holy

“ One of God:” and according to St. Luke

(IV. 41.) “ devils also came out of many,

“ crying out and saying, Thou art Christ,

“ the Son of God.” It was some time

after this that our Saviour asked his disci-

ples, (Matt. XVI. 13, 14.) “ Whom do

“ men say that I, the son of man, am?

“ And they said, Some say that thou art

“ John the baptist; some, Elias; and

“ others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.”

We see, that they regarded him as no more

than a prophet; they did not generally con-

ceive him to be the Messiah; the demoniacs

had fuller and juster notions of the sacred-

ness of his person, and of the dignity of his

character. Afterwards, when he asked his

disciples (ver. 15, 16, 17.) “ But whom say

“ ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and

“ said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the

“ living God. And Jesus answered and

“ said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon

“ Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not

“ revealed it unto thee, but my Father

“ which is in heaven.” It was impossible

therefore

therefore for mere madmen to have attained to this extraordinary degree of knowlege, but the discovery might easily have been made by beings of so much superior capacities and intellects as the fallen angels. If the thing had been generally known, it would have been to little purpose for our Lord to have charged the demoniacs to "hold their peace:" but he imposed silence upon them, for the same reason that he enjoined secrecy to his disciples, lest the publication of the truth should provoke the rage and malice of his enemies to put a period to his life, before his hour was come, before he had finished the due course of his ministry. The disciples might have published it with a good design for the glory of their master, but the devils would most probably have published it maliciously, and with intent to hasten on his destruction.

In this controversy we find two cases of madness and epilepsy particularly insisted on, in order to prove that these possessions were usually the one or the other: and it is not denied, that there are demoniacs who may labor under epilepsy and madness; but then,



then, I say, they are not mere epilepsy and madness; they are something more than natural diseases; there are effects which plainly point out and refer to some superior cause, as we shall be more fully convinced by taking the two cases into consideration.

While our Saviour was with Peter, James and John upon the mountain, which was the scene of his transfiguration, a certain man brought his young son to the disciples that they should cure him, and they could not. His case by the description of it was plainly epileptic, but it was something more than a common epilepsy, as is evident from several circumstances. All the three evangelists (Matt. XVII. Mark IX. Luke IX.) expressly ascribe it to "a devil, an unclean spirit, a dumb and deaf spirit;" and a distinction is made between the actions of the spirit as the agent, and of the demoniac as the patient. In St. Mark's account (ver. 18.) "wherefoever he (the spirit) taketh him, he teareth him; and he (the demoniac) foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away." St. Luke distinguisheth in like manner (ver. 39.) "And lo, a spirit taketh  
H " him,

“ him, and he suddenly crieth out ; and it  
 “ teareth him that he foameth again, and  
 “ bruising him, hardly departeth from him.”  
 He had long labored under this disease, for  
 it had grown up with him from his child-  
 hood : and in such cases the physicians  
 agree, that it is very difficult, if not im-  
 possible to be cured. Yet Jesus wrought  
 the cure ; and the miraculoufness of the  
 cure may obtain the greater credit to the  
 miraculoufness of the means, by which the  
 cure was wrought. “ Jesus rebuked the  
 “ devil,” faith St. Matthew, (ver. 18.)  
 “ and he departed out of him, and the  
 “ child was cured from that very hour.”  
 Here are two distinct events, which are not  
 to be confounded together, the dispossessing  
 of the evil spirit, and the cure of the young  
 man in consequence of it. St. Mark also  
 represents Jesus (ver. 25.) as “ rebuking  
 “ the foul spirit, and saying unto him,  
 “ Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge  
 “ thee, come out of him, and enter no  
 “ more into him.” A false and fallacious  
 manner of expreffion, and altogether un-  
 worthy of our Lord, if there were really no  
 spirit

spirit to come out or enter in again, and only a bodily disease to be cured. The cure too is altogether unlike the cure of a natural disease. (ver. 26, 27.) “ And the spirit  
 “ cried, and rent him fore, and came out  
 “ of him; and he was as one dead, inso-  
 “ much that many said, He is dead. But  
 “ Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted  
 “ him up; and he arose.” A natural dis-  
 ease doth not leave a patient with such sud-  
 den force and violence; but an evil spirit  
 might give as it were a parting blow, the  
 last effort of his malignity. “ And they  
 “ were all amazed,” saith St. Luke, (ver.  
 43.) “ at the mighty power of God :” but  
 the power of God appears much mightier  
 in the dispossessing of an evil spirit and the  
 curing of an epilepsy at the same time, than  
 in the curing of an epilepsy alone. When  
 the disciples afterwards asked our Lord in  
 private, (Matt. XVII. 19, 20, 21.) “ Why  
 “ could not we cast him out ?” He replied,  
 “ Because of your unbelief ;” if ye had  
 faith, ye should remove mountains, and no-  
 thing should be impossible unto you. “ How-  
 “ beit this kind goeth not out but by prayer



“ and fasting.” The physician who proposed (1) instead of *εν προσευχη και νησεια* by *prayer and fasting* to read *εν προσεχει νησεια* by *constant fasting*, proposed it only as the play of a sportive fancy, was not in earnest, and could not really approve it himself. For constant fasting never yet cured any one, nor ever can of an inveterate epilepsy; it will sooner put an end to the man, than to his distemper. *Prayer and fasting* are often joined together in scripture, as mutual helps, and requisites in any arduous undertaking, fasting making prayer more pure and intense more fervent and effectual; and without doubt they are the proper means to strengthen and increase our faith, and absolutely necessary to procure any miraculous gifts and graces. Our Saviour promiseth his disciples in another place, (Matt. XXI. 21, 22.) “ If ye have faith  
 “ and doubt not, ye shall say unto this  
 “ mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou  
 “ cast into the sea, it shall be done: And  
 “ all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer,

(1) Dr. Sykes's Inquiry into the meaning of Demoniacs,  
 p. 47.

“ believing,

“believing, ye shall receive.” St. James mentions it, as one of the miraculous gifts in his time, and as an encouragement to pray over the sick, (V. 15.) “that the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.” These then are the conditions without which no miraculous powers were obtained, and much more were they necessary to the performance of such an extraordinary miracle as this.

The case of the madman or madmen is still stronger, and more inexplicable upon the principles of mere disease, mere madness. According to St. Matthew (VIII. 28.) there were *two* of them; Mark (V. 2.) and Luke (VIII. 27.) mention only *one*, one being perhaps more frantic and outrageous than the other; but this difference maketh little difference in the case. It is said of him (Mark, ver. 3, 4.) that “he had his dwelling among the tombs, and no man could bind him, no not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man tame

“tame him.” Here was manifestly an exertion of strength far above all the natural powers of man. His plucking asunder and breaking in pieces the fetters and chains was something very extraordinary; but if he had done it once, they might have secured him with stronger chains; but he did it *often*; *neither could any man tame him*. He must be more than a mere madman, who was so wholly unconquerable; especially if (2) Dr. Mead’s observation be true, that “there is  
 “the less necessity for torments and stripes,  
 “because all madmen are of such a cowardly  
 “disposition; that even the most frantic  
 “and mischievous, after being *once or twice*  
 “tied, surrender at discretion, and thence  
 “forward refrain from committing any  
 “outrage through fear of punishment.”  
 “When he saw Jesus afar off,” (Mark, ver. 6.) “he ran and worshipped him.”  
 But how came a madman, who had been  
*of a long time* in that condition, who *wore*  
*no clothes, neither abode in any house, but al-*  
*ways*

(2) Mead. Medic. Sacr. Tormenta vero et plagæ ideominus sunt necessaria, quod animi tam pusilli, et imbelles sunt omnes infani; ut etiam acerrime furentes, semel aut iterum vincti, quasi victi se dedant, et in posterum meticolosi



*ways night and day was in the mountains and in the tombs, and was exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way; how came such a man in such a situation and condition to have any knowlege of the person and character of Jesus, who had but lately entered upon his ministry; and from so ferocious creature become all of a sudden so gentle and tractable as to fall down and worship him? Upon Jesus commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man, the man, or rather the demon speaking through the man,—for according to (3) Plato, the demoniacs do not speak their own language or dialect, but that of the demon who has entered into them—cried out, (ver. 6.)*  
*“ What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou*  
*“ Son of the most High God? I adjure*  
*“ thee by God that thou torment me not :”*  
*or as St. Matthew expresth it, (ver. 29.)*  
*“ What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou*  
*“ Son of God? art thou come hither to*

*lofi ab injuriis inferendis desistant. Cap. 9. p. 80. with Stack's translation.*

*(3) Plato apud Clem. Alex. την αὐτὴν ἐν φθεγγούῃς φωνὴν ἐπὶ διαλεκτοῖς, ἀλλὰ τὴν τῶν ὑποκισινῶν δαιμόνων. Strom. I. p. 338. Edit. Par. p. 405. Edit. Potter.*

“ torment

“ torment us before the time ?” And (Luke, ver. 30.) “ they besought him that he would “ not command them to go out into the “ deep,” the abyfs or bottomlefs pit. Thefe fayings might be dictated by evil fpirits, but otherwife could not proceed out of the mouth of madmen. Spoken of the former, they are very intelligible, having plainly fome reference to their future ftate and punifhment: but they are in no fhape applicable to the latter, and neither could fuch things, which were then but little known, enter into the ideas of madmen, who generally in their wildeft flights have yet fome fenfe and meaning. It farther appears that feveral evil fpirits had taken poffeffion of this man. For St. Luke introduceth the ftory by faying, (ver. 27.) he “ had devils long time ;” and upon his being asked What was his name, he answered “ Legion, for we are “ many,” as it is in St. Mark ; or as it is in St. Luke, (ver. 30.) “ becaufe many “ devils were entered into him,” which reafon is affigned not by the man, but by the evangelift. A certain number is put for an uncertain, as when it is faid (Luke VIII. 2.) that

that out of Mary Magdalen, “ went seven  
 “ devils,” and (Matt. XII. 45.) the unclean  
 spirit “ taketh with him seven other spirits”  
 more wicked than himself. It is certain  
 then, that a man may be possessed by a  
 number of demons; and the Heathens also  
 had something of the same notion, for we  
 find the phrase of (4) *larvarum plena*, full  
 of *larvæ*, full of spectres or goblins: but  
 whoever heard of *many* madnesses, of *seven*  
 madnesses, or a *legion* of madnesses? It is  
 natural for evil spirits to delight in mischief,  
 and accordingly they “ besought Jesus much”  
 (Mark, ver. 10.) “ that he would not send  
 “ them away out of the country,” but that he  
 would give them leave to pass into a herd of  
 swine that was feeding nigh unto the moun-  
 tains. For good reasons without doubt  
 (some of which we may discern) he per-  
 mitted them; and they went out of the man,  
 and entered into the swine, and the whole  
 herd, to the number of “ about two thou-  
 “ sand, ran voilently down a steep place  
 “ into the sea, and perished in the waters.”

(4) Nam hæc quidem ædipol *larvarum plena est*. Plaut.  
 Amphit. Act. 2. Sc. 2. ver. 145.



These things were a full demonstration of the great power as well as malice of these wicked spirits: but if there was nothing more than madness in the case, how could personal actions and speeches be attributed to it? how could Jesus hold discourse with a mere frenzy? how could a disease wish to stay in the country, and do farther mischief? answer questions, make use of intreaties, leave the body wherein it was and yet have a distinct being, enter into the whole herd of swine, and force animals, which are the most difficult to be driven, down a steep place into the sea. If these were the sayings and actions of devils, the whole narration is rational and consistent; but understood of a frenzy only, the story is false and frivolous: no sensible writers, and much less could inspired writers have written in this manner; and Woolston himself could hardly have exposed the sacred text to stronger ridicule.

If the question should be asked, How it came to pass, that these demoniacal cases abounded so much more at the commencement of the Christian æra, than at any other

other period before or since; it may be fairly answered, that if these cases had been peculiar to the time of our Saviour, yet that would have been no good argument against the truth of the facts. For there are certain distempers, which have been epidemic in one age, and yet unknown in any other. The sweating (5) sickness, for example, was never heard of before the fifteenth century in any age or nation; and after returning now and then, for the space of some years, has ever since entirely disappeared, and possibly may never return any more. But we read of some demoniacs, among the Gentiles as well as among the Jews, before our Saviour's time, and of many more afterwards; and if we hear more of them at that time particularly, the reason may be, because the existence and operations of evil spirits began then to be better known and understood; they were then living who had the gift of *discerning of spirits*; they were indued with such powers, as served to discover and expose the malignity

(5) See Freind's Hist. of Physic, Vol. II. p. 332.

nity of these wicked beings; they who could administer the cure, and perfect the recovery, must be best acquainted with the nature and cause of the disease; and their accounts are the only facts of this kind, which can absolutely be depended upon as genuine and true. There have been many pretended demoniacs, and many pretended exorcists; persons who have been instructed to counterfeit the most horrid gesticulations and distortions of body, as if they were seized and agitated by devils, and others who by the use of holy water and the muttering of certain prayers have restored and set them at liberty. But counterfeits are generally formed upon truths; and there may have been some real possessions in former times, there may be such at this present time; but we have not the faculty that I speak of, *discerning of spirits*, we cannot cast them out, and consequently cannot pronounce with certainty what are demoniacal possessions, and what are not. If there be no such possessions now in the world, this may be reckoned among the many other excellencies and advantages of the



the Christian religion, that it hath so curb-  
 ed and restrained the powers of evil spirits.  
 They had indeed at the time of our Savi-  
 our's appearance a particular reason for ex-  
 erting their power and malice in opposition  
 to the first erection and establishment of the  
 kingdom of God; and they might be per-  
 mitted to exert them to the utmost, in or-  
 der more effectually to display the superior  
 power and goodness of *him whom God sent  
 into the world*, to render their defeat more  
 conspicuous, and to gain the greater credit  
 to him and his disciples. No sooner had  
 Jesus entered upon his ministry, and cast  
 out an unclean spirit in the synagogue at  
 Capernaum, than the people (Matt. I. 27.)  
 "were all amazed, insomuch that they  
 "questioned among themselves, saying,  
 "What thing is this? what new doctrine is  
 "this? for with authority commandeth he  
 "even the unclean spirits, and they do  
 "obey him." Afterwards when he had  
 healed a dumb man, possessed with a devil,  
 (Matt. IX. 33.) "the multitudes marveled  
 "saying, It was never so seen in Israel."  
 Another time (Matt. XII. 22, 23.) there  
 "was

“ was brought unto him one possessed with  
 “ a devil, blind and dumb ; and he healed  
 “ him, infomuch that the blind and dumb  
 “ both spake and saw : And all the people  
 “ were amazed and said, Is not this the son  
 “ of David ?” None of his miracles were a  
 stronger and more illustrious proof of his  
 divine mission ; none of them were a more  
 immediate conquest of Satan, or tended  
 more to the subversion of his kingdom :  
 and ascribing this casting out of devils to  
 the power of the devils, was “ the sin never  
 “ to be forgiven, the blasphemy against the  
 “ Holy Ghost.” (1 John III. 8.) “ For  
 “ this purpose the Son of God was mani-  
 “ fested that he might destroy the works of  
 “ the devil :” and this manifestation could  
 not be made more signal and glorious than  
 by thus visibly and publicly casting out  
 devils. His casting them out of the bodies  
 was a proper type and emblem of his ex-  
 peling them also from the souls of men : it  
 was (as I may apply the words) an outward  
 and visible sign of an inward and spiritual  
 grace. Nothing could more experiment-  
 ally convince us, that “ greater is He that  
 “ is

"is in us than he that is in the world." Nothing could be a surer pledge and earnest of his final victory and triumph over all the powers of death and hell. (1 Cor. XV. 57.) "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

F I N I S.



ON THE DEMONSTRATION

"It is not that he stands in the world."  
Nothing could be a stronger and earnest  
of his final victory and triumph over all  
the powers of death and hell. (1 Cor. XV.  
27) "Thanks be to God which giveth  
us the victory through our Lord Jesus  
Christ."

THE END